



KAMALA HARRIS' victory speech November 8th 2020



Vice President-elect Kamala Harris delivered her first national address after American voters chose her running mate Joe Biden as the country's 46th president. Harris is America's first female, first Black and first South Asian vice president-elect.

[#CNN](#) [#News](#)

[com/watch?v=ExPm_hJQYpQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExPm_hJQYpQ)

Tasks:

1. Watch the video (it lasts 10 minutes).
2. Conjugate the verbs in brackets: simple present/ continuous present/ simple past/ present perfect/ future with the modal verb will.
3. Check and correct your answers by carefully listening to her speech again. Use contracted forms only if Kamala Harris does so.
4. Do the vocabulary* exercises.
5. Practise speech shadowing from 7'35 to 9'20.

Exercise 2: verb tenses.

Congressman John Lewis, before his passing*,(write): « Democracy is not a state, it is an act*! And what he (mean) is that America's democracy is not guaranteed. It is only as strong as our willingness* to fight for it, to guard it and never take it for granted*. And protecting our democracy (take) struggle*, it (take) sacrifice, but there (be) joy in it, and there (be) progress. Because we the people (have) the power to build a better future. And when our very democracy (be) on the ballot in this election, with the very soul* of America at stake* and the world watching, YOU(usher*) in a new day for America.



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To our campaign staff and volunteers*, this extraordinary team, thank you for bringing more people than ever before into the democratic process. And for making this victory possible, to the poll workers and election officials across our country, who (work) tirelessly to make sure every vote is counted, our nation (owe) you a debt of gratitude: you (protect) the integrity of our democracy.

And to the American people*, who (make) up our beautiful country, thank you for turning out in record numbers to make your voices heard. (...) For four years*, you (march) and (organize) for equality and justice, for our lives and for our planet, and then YOU (vote)! And you (deliver) a clear message. You (choose) hope and unity, decency, science, and yes, truth. You (choose) Joe Biden as the next president of the United States of America! And Joe (be) a healer, a uniter, a tested and steady hand, a person whose own experience of loss (give) him a sense of purpose that (help) us, as a nation, reclaim our own sense of purpose and a man with a big heart who (love) with abandon. (...)

And to the woman most responsible for my presence here today, my mother, Shyamala Gopalan Harris, who (be) always in our hearts. When she (come) here from India at the age of 19, she maybe quite (not imagine) this moment, but she (believe) so deeply in an America where a moment like this (be) possible. And so I (think) about her, and about the generations of women, Black women, Asian, White, Latina, Native American women, throughout our nation's history, (pave*) the way for this moment tonight women who (fight) and (sacrifice) so much for equality and liberty, and justice for all, including the black women who (be) often, too often, overlooked, but so often (prove) that they are the backbone* of our democracy.

All the women who (vote) to secure and protect the right to vote for over a century: 100 years ago with the 19th Amendment 55 years ago with the Voting Rights

Act and now in 2020 with a new generation of women in our country who (cast*) their ballot to continue the fight for their fundamental right to vote and be heard.

Tonight I (reflect*) on their struggle, their determination and the strength of their vision to see what can be unburdened* by what has been and I (stand) on their shoulders. And what a testament* it (be) to Joe's character that he (have) the audacity to break one of the most substantial barriers that (exist) in our country and select a woman as his Vice-President.



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But while I may (be) the first woman in this office, I (not be) the last! Because every little girl watching tonight (see) that this is a country of possibilities and to the children of our country, regardless of your gender, our country (send) you a clear message: « Dream with ambition, lead with conviction and see yourselves in a way that others may not, simply because they (never see) it before, but know we (applaud) you every step of the way!

And to the American people*, no matter who you (vote) for, I (strive*) to be a Vice-President like Joe (be) to President Obama: loyal, honest and prepared, waking up every day thinking of you and your family, because now is when the real work (begin): the hard work, the

necessary work, the good work, the essential work, to save lives and beat* this epidemic, to rebuild our economy so it (work) for working people, to root out systemic racism in our justice system and society, to combat the climate crisis, to unite our country and heal the soul of our nation.

And the road ahead (not be) easy, but America (be) ready, and so (be) Joe and I. We (elect) a president who (represent) the best in us! A leader the world (respect) and our children (look) up to. A commander in chief who'll respect our troops and keep our country safe. And a president for all Americans.

Exercise 3: grammar.

Explain some of your mistakes in exercise 2 (you may explain in French)



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Exercise 4: vocabulary.

The selected words have several meanings, so what do they mean in the Vice-President-Elect's speech? Choose the right translation in this context:

passing:

an act:

to usher:

volunteers:

for 4 years:

to cast:

to reflect:

a testament:

the American people:

to beat:

Find it in French:

a struggle=

to heal=

at stake=

our willingness=

the very soul=

unburdened=

to strive=

to take it for granted=

to pave the way=

the backbone=



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Exercise 5: Speech shadowing from 7'35 to 9'20.

In other words, you listen to the speech bit after bit and repeat the sentence (or part of the sentence) out loud  while pausing the video. Try to do it as many times as possible.

If you want to understand how useful speech shadowing is, click on this link:

NB: Practicing speech shadowing can be extremely useful to improving your English skills. 10 minutes every day would be ideal with any podcast/video you like, with a transcript or not.